I did not find, so far as I was informed by personal ob-
servation or report, that their conduct could on the whole be
called lawless. There was some stealing of pigs and chickens
and other petty pilfering, but rather less than might have been
expected* More serious excesses hardly, if ever, occurred,
The vagrants were throughout very good natured. They would
crowd around the military posts to learn from the
Yankee officers and soldiers something more about their " free-
dom " and also to get something to eat when they were hungry-
Then they had their carousals with singing and dancing and
their camp-meetings with their peculiar religious paroxysms
But while these things might in themselve$^{0}$ have been harm-
less enough under different circumstance;., they produced de-
plorable effects in the situation then existing. Those negroes
strayed away from the plantations just at the time when theii
labor was most needed to secure the crops of the season, and
those crops were more than ordinarily needed to save the popu-
lation from continued want and misery. Violent efforts wen
made by white people to drive the straggling negroes back tc
the plantations by force, and reports of bloody outrages in-
flicted upon colored people came from all quarters. I had oc-
casion to examine personally into several of those cases, and ]
saw in various hospitals negroes, women as well as men, whose
ears had been cut off or whose bodies were slashed with knive;

or bruised with whips, or bludgeons, or punctured with sho
wounds. Dead negroes were found in considerable number ii
the country roads or on the fields, shot to death, or strung upoi
the limbs of trees. In many districts the colored people wer<
in a panic of fright, and the whites in a state of almost insan<
irritation, against them. Indeed, these conditions in their wors
form were only local, but they were liable to spread, for ther<
was plenty of inflammable spirit of the same kind all over th